

Conflict on the Border

Middle School Education Program

Agents of Destiny

Pre Visit Activity-Westward Expansion

Soldiers at Fort Scott kept peace on the frontier and kept white settlers off Indian land. However, they also played a part in a number of tasks that had the opposite effect. Dragoons from Fort Scott helped to patrol the Santa Fe and the Oregon Trails. This made the trails safer for travel and encouraged more people to move west. Both dragoon and infantry soldiers fought in the Mexican War, which brought much new land into the United States and opened the West for settlement.

The army established Fort Scott in 1842. At that time, the Permanent Indian Frontier formed the western boundary of the United States. Although the United States owned land further west, settlers had not yet moved there. Eight years later, the map of the United States had changed; the country now owned land all the way to the Pacific Coast.

On the back of this page are maps of the United States in 1840 and 1850. Study them, and then answer the questions below.

Which 3 areas did the United States acquire between 1840 and 1850? (Look for areas with large letters on 1850s map.)

Which 5 states entered the Union during the 1840s? Which two of these came from the new territories.? (States are shown with the dates in bold lettering underneath the name of the states. Also, Missouri and Maine were already states. The dates written in parentheses under these states indicate that land was added to these states during those years.)

What two territories were created in 1850?

How many states were there in 1840? In 1850? (All the areas shaded dark grey east of Kansas were states. Kansas, though, was not a state. Also, there was no West Virginia until the Civil War. It was all just Virginia)

Using a map of the current United States, list 4 states that were part of the Mexican Cession and 3 states that were part of Oregon Country.

Bonus Questions

Estimate the percentage of land that was added to the United States in the 1840s.

Why was Fort Scott abandoned in 1853? (Consider all the new land in the United States and consider the fact that the fort was originally established to help keep people off of Indian land and from moving further west)

